

A vertical teal bar is positioned on the right side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom. It contains the 'Simply Better!' logo and the text 'Self-Assessment System' in purple.

*Simply
Better!*
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Self-Assessment System

Information and Analysis Dimension Workbook

Overview to the Self-Assessment System

Dimension Workbooks

- Customer Focus and Satisfaction
- Leadership
- **Information and Analysis**
- Strategic Planning
- Human Resource Development
- Management of Process Quality
- Quality and Results

Guidebook for Conducting the Self-Assessment

These icons will help you to find your way through all Simply Better! products:



Resources



Answer-Score-
Brainstorm



Group
Exercise



Case Study



Helpful
Hints



Key terms
and Concepts



Useful Notes



World Class

Introduction

Information and Analysis examines your organization's use and management of valid data and information to drive excellence and improve overall performance compared to similar organizations. It also examines the adequacy of the organization's data, information, and analysis system to support management by fact and improvement of its services, internal operations, human resource capabilities, and customer focus.

By the time you have completed the dimension, you will have identified strengths and opportunities for improvement in these three sections:

A. Management of Information and Data

How your organization selects the types of data and information it collects and uses for planning and management, and how it improves the quality of this data.

B. Comparisons and Benchmarking

The types of data and information the organization collects on competitors, similar providers, and world or national leaders both in and out of the field; and how these comparative data are used to improve quality and overall performance.

C. Analysis and Use of Data

The approaches used to aggregate and use various types of data to improve quality, customer, and operational performance.

The Self-Assessment System

Information and Analysis



In a world class organization, performance management is built on a framework of measurement, information, data, and analysis. Measures come from the organization's strategy and encompass all key processes and the outputs and results of those processes. Data is collected about all aspects of the organization and analysis of the data supports decision making at all levels.

Information and analysis support planning, reviewing performance, improving operations, comparing performance with best practices, benchmarks, and more. A system of measures and indicators tied to customer and organizational performance requirements represents a clear and objective basis for aligning all activities with the organization's goals.



Customer

The people, organizations, or groups receiving the products or services of your organization. In the S-A-S, customers are job seekers and employers, the direct beneficiaries of local workforce development services.

Benchmarking

The continuous process of assessing, measuring, and comparing your services, functions, and practices to those of world class organizations, both inside and outside your field.

Customer Driven Quality

Consistently meeting and/or exceeding the ever-increasing needs and expectations of the customer.

Cycle Time

Reducing the time required to perform a process by eliminating non-value added activities, bottlenecks, or constraints. An example of cycle time might be the time needed to fill a vacancy after receiving a job listing from an employer.

Getting Started

Now that you are familiar with the continuous improvement concepts and terms for Information and Analysis, you are ready to look at how your own organization handles these issues. There are five exercises to complete this dimension.

Answer the Questions

This exercise involves developing a shared understanding of how your organization works. When discussing and answering the questions, your team should develop a common understanding of what is done, who does it, how often, how well, the results achieved, and how well it is documented.

Score the Questions

This exercise is about determining a consensus team score for each section. Each question or sub-element of a question has equal weight. Please see the instructions on the next page.

Brainstorm Strengths and Opportunities

This exercise will help you identify your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Brainstorming can occur after each question is scored or after the entire section has been scored. The purpose of brainstorming is to get ideas out quickly; discussion will come later during the next exercise. All ideas should be recorded using a flip chart or the blank spaces provided in the Brainstorm sections of the booklet.

Discuss and Rank Strengths and Opportunities

This exercise will help you to make your many lists of strengths and opportunities much more manageable. It will be done after you have finished answering, scoring, and brainstorming for all sections in the dimension. Please see the instructions near the end of the booklet.

Plan for Action

This exercise will lead your team through several initial steps in the overall process for implementing continuous improvement changes. This step may be optional for your team at this stage, depending on what process your organization has chosen to develop a final action plan.

The Self-Assessment System

Information and Analysis

Score the Questions

Follow these instructions to find your team score for where your organization stands on Information and Analysis.

Step One

Individually or as a team decide where your organization falls along the thermometer. This is a continuum, so don't be afraid to locate yourself anywhere along the thermometer.

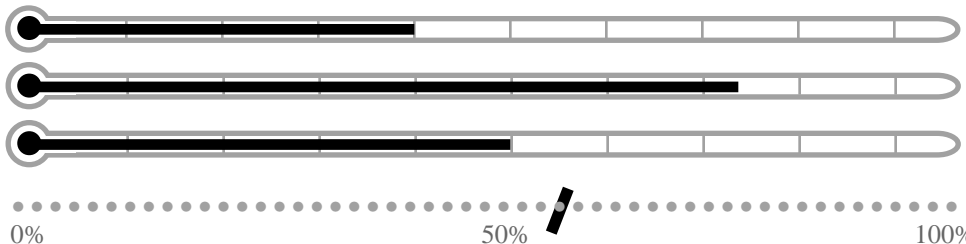
Step Two

Using a crayon or marker, fill in the thermometer up to the point on the scale which best matches your organization. Remember, this is a subjective judgment, so precision is impossible!



Step Three

For each section, mark the average score on the bottom scale. You may want to eyeball the average length of the lines to come up with a score or you may want to compute the average. Again, because this is subjective, precise scoring is not necessary.



In this example, the score is about 55%, which is very good! Most organizations seriously involved in quality and continuous improvement can expect to fall in the 40% - 60% range. Even nationally recognized award winners rarely score above 75% across all categories.

Answer Score Brainstorm



Within each of the Sections - **A** through **C** - you will repeat the following three exercises:

- **Answer** the questions as a team.
- **Score** your organization.
- **Brainstorm** strengths and opportunities for improvement.

After you have covered all of the sections in the dimension, you will complete your work by doing the final two exercises:

- **Discuss and rank** your entire list of strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- **Plan** for action (optional at this stage).

You now have the background information and instructions you need to begin to answer, score and brainstorm the questions for Information and Analysis. Before you continue, be sure that everyone on your team understands the general concepts and terms being used. Also, be sure that everyone has a clear understanding of the instructions and scoring system. Finally, check for consensus about the process that will be used. Remember, this is your process, so feel free to modify and improve it to suit the needs of your team and organization.

A. Management of Information and Data

You may complete this section one of two ways:

Option 1

- **Answer** the entire section
- **Score** the entire section
- **Brainstorm** the entire section

Option 2

- **Answer** question 1
- **Score** question 1
- **Brainstorm** question 1
- Continue with questions 2-5



Answer these questions:

1. How do we select what data and information is needed in our organization?
2. How do the data that we collect relate to customers' needs?
3. How do we ensure that the measures that we are using relate to quality and operational performance?
4. How do we ensure that our data meet users' needs for rapid update and ready availability?
5. How do we evaluate and improve our selection, analysis, and integration of data and information?



Q1. This area represents a key foundation for a performance-oriented organization. Both financial and non-financial information and data are needed for planning, assessment, and performance improvement. Examples of information and data are customer satisfaction, key features of the various services provided, current performance on those features, indicators that predict customer satisfaction early in the service process, current performance on those process indicators, cost of service, employee well-being, and contractors' performance and quality.

Q5. Evaluation of data and information might include review of the scope of information in use and how it focuses on organizational goals and priorities, use and analysis of data to support process management and improvement, the paths of data, its extent and effectiveness of use, gaps, and sharing of information and data. Feedback from users of information and data might be obtained from formal or informal surveys, focus groups, team interviews, etc.

The Self-Assessment System

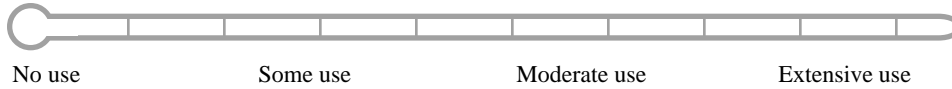
Information and Analysis

Score Section A

1. How do we select what data and information is needed in our organization?



We use data and information that support planning and assessment of outcomes, quality, internal operations, human resource utilization, and customer focus:



Data and information is used extensively by managers and staff in:



2. How do the data that we collect relate to customers' needs?

Data is collected for key process design requirements which are developed from customer input for:



3. How do we ensure that the measures that we are using relate to quality and operational performance?

Our measures and data relating to quality and operational performance are aligned with our goals:



Our measures are chosen to correlate with factors that lead to improved customer, operational, and financial performance.

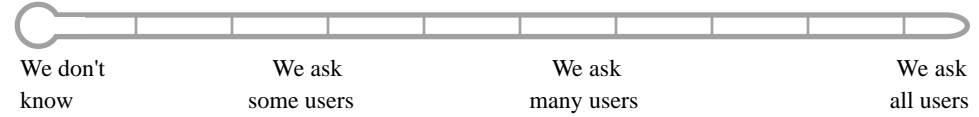


(Complete scoring on next page)



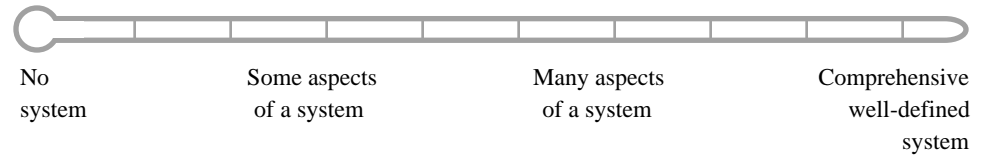
4. How do we ensure that our data meet users' needs for rapid update and ready availability?

We know that our data meet users' needs because:

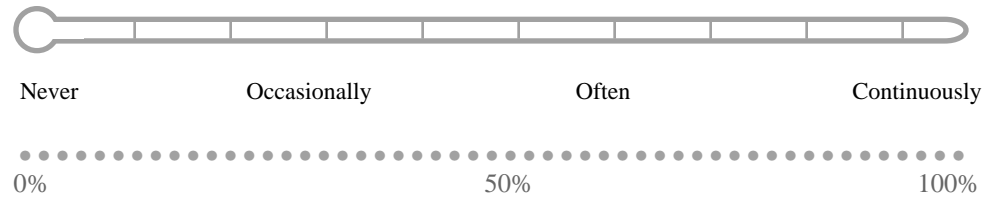


5. How do we evaluate and improve our selection, analysis, and integration of data and information?

Our methods for evaluating and improving our data make up:



We use our system for evaluating and improving data:



Brainstorm Section A



- Going in a circle, have each member of the team share one strength (passing is allowed).
- Record the idea on a flipchart; discuss the idea only enough to make sure that it is correctly recorded.
- Keep going around until everyone's ideas are recorded.
- Repeat the same process for opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

B. Comparisons and Benchmarking

You may complete this section one of two ways:

Option 1

- **Answer** the entire section
- **Score** the entire section
- **Brainstorm** the entire section

Option 2

- **Answer** question 1
- **Score** question 1
- **Brainstorm** question 1
- Continue with questions 2 and 3



Answer these questions:

1. **How do we select which comparison and benchmarking information to seek from others?**
2. **How do we use comparative and benchmark data?**
3. **How do we evaluate and improve the overall process for selecting and using comparisons and benchmarking information?**



Q1. Comparisons and benchmarking address external sources for information and data which provide you with information about how you compare with others or measure up to best practices in the field. Sources of comparison and benchmarking information might include: cooperative sharing with other organizations, publication of summary information such as annual reports, onsite evaluations, evaluations by independent organizations, and field trips to learning labs.

Q3. Evaluation might consider the effectiveness of use of the information obtained, adequacy of the information, training needed in acquiring information and using information, improvement potential, and cost effectiveness.

Score Section B



1. How do we select which comparison and benchmarking information to seek from others?

We select comparisons based on the strength of linkage to our goals and priorities.



Within any goal, we select comparisons based on potential for improving operations.



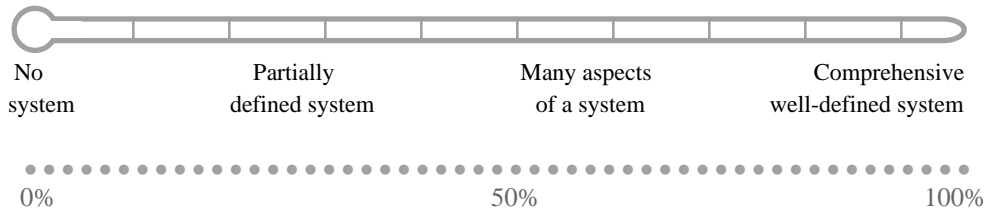
2. How do we use comparative and benchmarking data?

We use these data as a catalyst both to improve understanding of processes and process performance and encourage breakthroughs:



3. How do we evaluate and improve the overall process for selecting and using comparisons and benchmarking information?

We evaluate and improve the overall process by using:





Brainstorm Section B

- Going in a circle, have each member of the team share one strength (passing is allowed).
- Record the idea on a flipchart; discuss the idea only enough to make sure that it is correctly recorded.
- Keep going around until everyone's ideas are recorded.
- Repeat the same process for opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

C. Analysis and Use of Data

You may complete this section one of two ways:

Option 1

- **Answer** the entire section
- **Score** the entire section
- **Brainstorm** the entire section

Option 2

- **Answer** question 1
- **Score** question 1
- **Brainstorm** question 1
- Continue with questions 2-4

Answer these questions:

1. What analyses are used to gain understanding about customers?
2. What analyses are used to gain understanding about operational performance?
3. What analyses are used to gain understanding about comparative performance?
4. What analyses are used to relate customer data, improvements in service quality, and improvements in operational performance to changes in public support and/or funding growth?



Q1. Analysis should support reviews, decision making, and strategic planning. Data for such analysis must come from all parts of the organization and be synthesized to form a sound basis for setting priorities and taking actions. Analysis includes considering trends, projections, cause-effect correlations, and the search for deeper understanding needed to set priorities.



Q2. Examples of measures of productivity include placements per counselor, job orders per job developer, and persons served per day through the job information resource center. Examples of cycle time measures include time to complete intake and assessment, time to complete training, and time to fill new job listings.



Score Section C

1. What analyses are used to gain understanding about customers?

We analyze: a) how service quality correlates with key customer indicators such as satisfaction and self-sufficiency; b) how service design relates to satisfaction and job placement; c) how customer needs and expectations can be effectively converted to efficient service design; and d) cost implications of customer-related problems.



2. What analyses are used to gain understanding about operational performance?

We analyze: a) trends in improvement of key operational indicators such as productivity and cycle time; b) benefits and costs of employee training; c) employee retention and motivation; d) trends for termination rates, placement rates, wage rates, and competency development; e) trends for job listings, fill rates, and employer base; and f) return on investment.



3. What analyses are used to gain understanding about comparative performance?

We analyze: a) performance trends relative to comparable organizations for key quality attributes; b) productivity and cost trends; and c) operational performance.



4. What analyses are used to relate customer data, improvements in service quality, and improvements in operational performance to changes in public support and/or funding growth?

We analyze: a) relationships between quality and cost; b) our success rate in obtaining new grants; c) the amount of positive media attention; d) awareness levels of legislators about our success; and e) trends in quality versus growth in our employer base.



Brainstorm Section C



- Going in a circle, have each member of the team share one strength (passing is allowed).
- Record the idea on a flipchart; discuss the idea only enough to make sure that it is correctly recorded.
- Keep going around until everyone's ideas are recorded.
- Repeat the same process for opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

Summary of Team Scores

Average the three scores to get an overall score for Information and Analysis.

A. Management of Information and Data	<input data-bbox="745 409 865 493" type="text" value="%"/>
B. Comparisons and Benchmarking	<input data-bbox="745 539 865 623" type="text" value="%"/>
C. Analysis and use of Data	<input data-bbox="745 659 865 743" type="text" value="%"/>

Overall Score

Remember, this is not a score of how good your organization is - it is a score reflecting how far you are on the road to continuous improvement. This is what the scores tell you:

0% - 10%

You have not or have barely begun to implement continuous improvement into your processes.

10% - 30%

You have begun to implement continuous improvement in a few of your processes.

30% - 60%

You have implemented continuous improvement in a wide range of your processes in many parts of your organization.

60% - 80%

You have implemented continuous improvement processes throughout virtually all of your organization.

80% and above

You have world-class, exceptionally sophisticated processes in all areas of your organization, and you continuously improve the processes themselves.

Discuss and Rank Strengths and Opportunities



Now that you have answered and scored the questions and brainstormed strengths and opportunities for improvement, you need to make some sense of the large quantities of information you have. This exercise will help you to make this information much more manageable. Your flipcharts should be hung around the room where everyone can see them.

- **Group** the similar strengths and opportunities into categories to make the list more manageable. Depending on how many items you have, you may want to start out by brainstorming categories, by eliminating duplicate items, or by marking similar items with numbers or colored dots. Individual items may fall into more than one category. As with brainstorming, there should not be much discussion at this stage, just enough to develop the categories.
- **Choose** the order in which you want to discuss the strengths and opportunities listed. Some may not require much discussion. It can be helpful to set time limits for each item.
- **Discuss** the strengths and opportunities in depth. You do not need to solve problems now; you only need to be sure that you come to a common understanding of which are the most vital to be worked on or represent potential for taking action right away.
- **Rank** the opportunities in the order of importance for developing next steps and future actions.



Plan for Action

Many teams will be instructed by the coordinator to begin the process of planning for action. This process will lead your team through action planning steps and will result in an initial redesign of a service or process.

- **Select** a service or process to be improved. From the list of Opportunities for Improvement select one of the top vital few which were identified as a result of answering the questions. The relative scores for each question or section should provide a starting point for identifying where the largest gaps exist. The priorities for improvement in the organization should also be considered. Decision can be reached by multi-voting and coming to consensus.
- **Describe** the current process. Definition of the current situation began while answering the questions. Further research is now needed to identify the key features of the current process, describe the work flow, and identify current process measures.
- **Determine** the wants, needs, and expectations for the service or process. Determine who the 'customers' of the process are and what they want, need and expect. This step helps define the future desired state for the area under improvement.
- **Gather** data to determine the extent to which the current process meets the wants and expectations. Doing this step provides vital measurable information about the extent to which current reality meets the desired level of performance.
- **Redesign** the improved process to meet the wants, needs, and expectations. Define the design criteria and design the improved process. A measurement system should also be established, and requirements for implementation should be determined.

Take Action

After your team completes the five action planning steps for several of the top-ranked opportunities for improvement, it is time to stop. Your assessment work within this dimension is complete.

Congratulate yourselves for your hard work and accomplishments!

Your next steps are to get together with all the other dimension teams to share what everyone has found and to discuss and rank all the vital opportunities. Once your organization chooses the most important opportunities for taking action, you are ready to take the last two steps in the continuous process improvement model - implement the improvement and manage the process of change.

- **Implement** the improvement. Develop an implementation plan which specifies desired results, assigns responsibilities, and provides time frames. The plan should be approved, communicated, and monitored for results.
- **Manage** the process of change. Obtain customer feedback, monitor performance and impact, communicate the results, and fine tune the process by identifying new areas for improvement.